



Letter from Taizé

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Holy Spirit, however small our resources may be, make us able to bring peace where there is opposition or violence. Help us to let a ray of God's compassion shine out through our life. Yes, enable us to love and to express it by the life we lead.

Hungarian Bas relief

Prayer by Brother Roger, of Taizé

THE BUDAPEST MEETING 2001-2002

Showing that trust and reconciliation are possible

Thousands of young people from Europe and beyond are planning to come to Budapest. In many places people are already gathering to pray and meet in preparation for the meeting.

At this time of tension, a prayer for God to inspire all those who are seeking peace is particularly present. Throughout Germany this autumn over fifty prayer vigils, "Nights of Light", are planned.

In Budapest, the prayer is also intense, not only in the city-centre church where the brothers, sisters and young adults who are involved in preparing the meeting gather each day at midday, but also in the parishes. In some of these places, a regular prayer has continued since the last meeting in Budapest, in 1991.

"I like to think of the meeting as above all an 'inner pilgrimage', writes Judith from Budapest, because of the gift of peace I have discovered deep within me. I hope the meeting will be a time when we help each other move forward on the path of peace. We have an opportunity to bear witness together that trust and reconciliation are possible and I am looking forward to all the hope that this will engender."

Many preparatory gatherings have already been held in Budapest itself and in the surrounding region. This is spreading the information about the meeting at the end of the year which people are looking forward to with joy. The warm welcome which the Hungarians are preparing will make it possible for participants in the meeting to overcome their awkwardness about not speaking Hungarian! When you take time to talk with Hungarians, it is often possible to sense how deeply they feel the need to heal the wounds of history – whether those of the distant past or those which are more recent.

Bishop Asztrik, abbot of Pannonhalma, Hungary's great and historic abbey, greeted the news of the meeting in Budapest with these words: "It will be a gift of God for Hungarians. The presence of young people from all over the world – with their searching for God and a deeper meaning to their life, with their openness to one another and to-

wards the world's problems, with their prayer which comes straight from the heart – will be a tangible sign for us of God's love, of its depth and breadth. And in his love, God calls us in Hungary to remain young in heart in order to be children of God. In this way we shall be ready to change the face of the earth and heal the wounds of those who suffer."

In parishes throughout the region small "preparation groups" are working to unearth all the good things that happen in their neighbourhood; for example, initiatives for the homeless and groups who visit children's homes. During the meeting in Budapest it will also be possible to meet people who lived through the long years when Christians were excluded and under great pressure. People who are such "witnesses of hope" will meet with young people during the morning meetings in small groups or in the afternoon workshops.

Making peace

At the end of the summer in Taizé, before the grave events of September 11, some of the topics of the reflection workshops on peace, globalisation, and the construction of Europe, had already been put down in writing. Since then, the international context has changed dramatically. Yet these notes remain topical because the basic problems remain the same, and require great attention in order to provide solid foundations for the efforts to build peace.

Europe and peace

In the summer workshops, among the foremost of everybody's concerns was the question of peace. Building peace, which is far from being an established fact in many areas of the world, is certainly a matter of great urgency, especially after the disappointments following the end of the cold war. The fact is that at the present time numerous conflicts are taking place in the world, including in Europe, or threatening to do so. Without peace, no development is possible. You cannot work on economic and social development when an area is at war. This has been one of the great tragedies of a significant part of sub-Saharan Africa for the last ten years. So we have to ask ourselves how we avoid running away from this responsibility. How do we assume our responsibility in the world?

It is the urgency to establish peace that is at the root of the construction of Europe; at the root of a union that is not only economic, financial and commercial, but political, social and human. The questioning that arose during these last months, stimulated by what went on in some of the discussion groups, goes as follows: how can we move from a fairly successful construction of an economic Europe towards the aim of political union? This is not so much so that Europe may become a new "power". Rather, in order to be able to advance and progress, Europe has to embody something in the nature of a common political project that will make it possible for the European peoples to live together better, and that will inspire young Europeans to build together.

How can we fail to understand the discouragement of some of the young as they see vested interests opposing the opening of frontiers and thus holding up the start of a new stage in the pro-

cess? With ten million Hungarians living within their frontiers and three million Hungarians living outside the frontiers that were fixed by the Trianon Treaty of 1921, Hungary clearly symbolises one kind of problem bequeathed by history to the Europeans of today and tomorrow.

Europe is also confronted with the problem of the arrival of foreigners, of the status of refugees, and of welcoming others. These questions bring us face to face with the fact that the construction of Europe does not concern only Europeans but its consequences go far beyond. For the other peoples, does Europe offer a message of hope and solidarity, or will it appear like a threat or a closed-off area?

Economy and development

These last months we have spoken a great deal about the reorganisation of the economy on a worldwide scale, in what is called "globalisation"; a word that causes unease, as if the concept had suddenly crystallised the anxieties and the opposition, as well as the hopes, of many.

The concept has crystallised fundamental anxieties. Is not this reorganisation of the economy, and of social life on a planetary scale, a source of even greater inequalities in a world already beset by grave inequalities? Is not this a new manifestation of the way in which the West and free enterprise come to deprive the poorest and the weakest of control of their own destiny?

On the other hand, "globalisation" is also a concept or a movement that brings hope, because the new communication technologies can have a usefulness that is beneficial for a great many.

In certain cases we can see that being able to define problems on a world level has positive effects. We have seen mobilisation on an international level to make it possible for the countries of sub-Saharan Africa to have access to drugs against AIDS and to licenses that allow them to manufacture these drugs. In the field of disarmament, through the prohibition of land mines, we have seen that it is possible to direct the means of globalisation in the direction of the respect for life and human dignity.

In the reflection workshops, the experiences of some of the young people revealed possibilities of influencing the course of the local economy while at the same time being careful not to ignore what is going on in the international sphere. Furthermore, how could we remain unaware of the confrontation between globalisation, driven by the economy and by the wild and blind search for profit, and the universality to which the Gospel calls us: a universality based on solidarity and on the values that the message of Christ came to bring?

One of the workshop animators said: "Many of the young people feel that there is a discrepancy between the globalisation that is being offered - or more exactly imposed - and the universality they would like to create. In Taizé they experience something of this kind of universality: through very simple gestures, countless meetings, discovering new faces, sharing together, and the possibility of living together on a planetary scale - certainly on the scale of the eighty different nationalities represented each week throughout the summer. This other way of living universality is what they are searching for as well, albeit in a confused way, through their questions on the economic changes that are taking place at the present time."

A PRAYER

to accompany the Pilgrimage of trust on earth in Budapest

In many cities and towns, young adults will be gathering for prayer just before their departure for Budapest. Others who will be staying home may wish to meet together, either in large or small groups, as a way of joining in spirit with those who will be in Hungary. Here are some suggestions for prayer on this occasion.

Songs:

In the Lord *or* J  sus le Christ
Alleluia, slava tiebie Bo  

Psalms 146

sung or spoken with "Alleluia" between each verse:

My soul, give praise to the Lord; I will praise the Lord all my days.

They are happy who are helped by God, whose hope is in the Lord their God, who made heaven and earth.

It is the Lord who keeps faith for ever, who is just to those who are oppressed.

It is God who gives bread to the hungry, the Lord, who sets captives free.

The Lord raises up those who are bowed down; the Lord protects the stranger.

Bible reading

Luke 13:18-21

Jesus said: "What is the kingdom of God like? And to what should I compare it? It is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in the garden; it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air made nests in its branches." And again he said, "To what should I compare the kingdom of God? It is like yeast that a woman

took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened."

Song

In manus tuas *or*
Christe, lux mundi

Silence

Intercessions

sung or spoken with "Kyrie eleison" between each petition:

Christ Jesus, sent into the world so that we may live through you: Be with us, Lord Emmanuel!

Christ Jesus, you remain alongside all who are despised or humiliated: Be with us, Lord Emmanuel!

Christ Jesus, you make our deserts blossom; you lead us towards the land of gladness: Be with us, Lord Emmanuel!

Christ Jesus, Good News will be proclaimed to the poor and freedom to captives: Be with us, Lord Emmanuel!

Christ Jesus, broken hearts will be healed, the starving filled: Be with us, Lord Emmanuel!

Christ Jesus, the paths will be leveled and your glory will dwell in our land: Be with us, Lord Emmanuel!

Our Father

Song

The kingdom of God *or*
Magnificat (canon)

Prayer

of Brother Roger :

Jesus our peace, your Holy Spirit always opens a way for us: it consists in abandoning ourselves to God. And we understand that to love means living in communion both with God and with those who are entrusted to us.

Songs

In resurrectione tua *or*
Da pacem in diebus

Bendigo al Se  or



*The daily prayer
in a church in
the centre of Budapest.*

Is joy possible when there is misfortune, injustice and violence?

What is the value of joy? Is it useful?

"Rejoice in the Lord always" (Ph 4:4), writes Paul the apostle. But when people are experiencing misfortune, isn't joy out of place? Paul himself recognizes that there are times to weep: "Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep" (Rm 12:15). The Bible speaks of moments when joy disappears. "By the rivers of Babylon" the Israelites have no more desire to rejoice: "How could we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?" (Psalm 137)

Can one sing while experiencing misfortune? The psalm cited above asserts that when one is faced with suffering, singing "songs of joy" is somehow intolerable. And yet we know that there were people who did sing when they were in Babylon. The book of Daniel tells the story of three young men whom the king has thrown into an enormous furnace. In the middle of the flames they walk about and sing! The fire symbolizes great trial and suffering. But through it all, the three young men praise God: "Blessed be the Lord, praise him forever". As they sing, their hearts open wide to all God's creatures. They name them lovingly, one after another, with wonder before their very existence. "Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord; sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever." This is the song that rises from the furnace of Babylon (Dan 3)!

We know that Jesus was not always joyful. The Gospels sometimes show him distressed at the hardness of certain people's hearts. On one occasion he became angry. He also cried at the death of his friend Lazarus, as he did while contemplating the city of Jerusalem and foreseeing its eventual ruin. When faced with the reality of his own death, he was "grieved and agitated" (Mt 26:37). However it is also true that Jesus never stopped giving thanks. One day, when one town after another had been turning him away, he looked up to God, "rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, 'I thank you Father'" (Lk 10:21). Upon arriving at the gates of Jerusalem, he provokes the crowd's joy and is acclaimed as Messiah, all the while aware that the cross awaits him (Mt 21). Right after leaving for the garden of Gethsemane, where he will finally be arrested, he sings the psalms with his disciples (Mt 26:30).

There are circumstances where joy is out of place. But if somehow joy were to show itself, in spite of everything, would it be right to reject it? When going through trouble, we can sometimes experience an unexpected flash of joy. Without any apparent reason, a yes to life and thanks to God can fill our heart. Unexplainable suffering exists, but so does unexplainable joy, as in the song of the three young men in the furnace. With their song they invite "the humble of heart" to praise and bless God (Dn 3:87). The humble of heart are those who cry and sing at the same time. It was of them that Jesus spoke when he said, "Happy are those who mourn, for they will be comforted" (Mt 5).

The value and usefulness of working for justice and peace is obvious. But to make an option for joy, which the Gospel also asks, raises all kinds of questions. What could the quest for joy bring us and bring to others?

Joy is like a shield that protects us from discouragement, bitterness, and resentment. Joy pushes them back and sets them running. Once Nehemiah had had Jerusalem rebuilt, the priest Ezra said to all the people: "Do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength" (Neh 8:10). Nehemiah had built great walls so as to protect the city. But more so than stone ramparts, it is joy that creates a place where it is safe to live and where life can flourish.

Joy keeps us from becoming isolated. "I will tell of your name to my brothers and sisters; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you" (Ps 22). The one who spoke these words had been persecuted and sick and had despaired in life; he had been abandoned by everyone. But when God hears his prayer and comes to help, the joy that the psalmist experiences attracts the attention of others. Those who had poured scorn on him earlier are the ones who gather around him, and he is happy that they all come forward. His joy is forgiveness. He is angry with no-one. In the same way, the denial of reconciliation goes together with the inability to rejoice. In the parable of the prodigal son, the father wishes to reconcile the elder brother with the younger and begs him to come in as the whole household celebrates the return of the prodigal son. But the elder brother has just as much trouble entering the room as he does with forgiving his brother. If he could be happy, then reconciliation could happen, and almost all by itself (Lk 15).

In another parable Jesus tells about a man who finds a treasure hidden in a field: "In his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field" (Mt 13:44). Joy makes bold choices possible. It gives us the momentum we need to follow Christ.

It is most interesting that Saint Paul sees kindness as one of joy's effects. After having said, "rejoice in the Lord always" a second time, he goes on, "Let your goodness be known to everyone" (Ph 4:5). The word translated by "goodness" is rich in meaning. It can be used to signify God's gentleness. "Although you are sovereign in strength, you judge with mildness" (Ws 12:18). When the word is applied to those in positions of authority, it expresses kind understanding and moderation. While extremism, of whatever form or origin, is basically sad, kindness and moderation are born up by joy. The deep struggle to remain "joyful in hope" (Rm 12:12) is expressed in love, a love so strong that it cannot possibly wish misfortune for anyone.

These short readings are those read, day by day, at community prayer in Taizé. The Bible reference given indicates a slightly longer passage.

1 Tue Joseph forgave his brothers saying: Do not be afraid; it is for me to put myself in God's place? The harm you planned to do me has, by God's design, been turned to good.

Gn 50:15-21

2 Wed Jesus said: Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant will also be.

Jn 12:20-33

3 Thu The Lord says: I did not tell my people to search for me in chaos. I am the Lord God, who proclaims justice, who speaks what is true.

Is 45:18-19

4 Fri The Word was the true light that gives light to everyone. To all those who accepted him he gave the right to become children of God.

Jn 1:9-12

5 Sat I thank you, God, for your love and your faithfulness; you have given new strength to my heart.

Ps 138

6 SUN EPIPHANY
When they saw the star, the wise men were filled with a great joy. As they entered, they saw the child with his mother, Mary, and they knelt down and worshipped him.

Mt 2:1-12

7 Mon With all my heart I seek you, O God. I treasure your promises in my heart so as not to sin against you.

Ps 119:1-16

8 Tue Console my people, says your God, console them and speak to their hearts.

Is 40:1-5

9 Wed Paul writes to Timothy: You have in you a spiritual gift which was given to you. Do not neglect it.

1 Tm 4:12-16

10 Thu A leper came to Jesus and said, "If you are willing, you can cleanse me." Filled with compassion, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing. Be clean!"

Mk 1:40-45

11 Fri The Lord says: It is not enough for you to be my servant. I shall make you a light to the nations so that my salvation may reach the furthest corners of the earth.

Is 49:1-6

12 Sat Jesus said: It is mercy that pleases me, not sacrifice.

Mt 12:1-8

13 SUN When Jesus had been baptised, he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming down on him. And a voice came from heaven: This is my Son, the Beloved, my favour rests on him.

Mt 3:13-17

14 Mon Jesus said: The will of the one who sent me is that I should lose none of those he has given me, but that I should raise them up on the last day.

Jn 6:37-40

15 Tue Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, heard what John had said and followed Jesus. He found his brother Simon and told him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ).

Jn 1:35-42

16 Wed Paul writes: I thank Christ Jesus, our Lord, who has given me strength. By calling me into his service he has considered me trustworthy.

1 Tm 1:12-17

17 Thu Jesus said: It is not the healthy who need a doctor but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.

Mk 2:15-17

18 Fri Seek perseverance, true devotion, mutual kindness and love. If you live with these things, they will bring you to a real knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 P 1:5-8

19 Sat Philip said to Jesus, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." Jesus said, "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father."

Jn 14:1-12

20 SUN John the Baptist saw Jesus coming towards him and said: There is the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Jn 1:29-34

21 Mon St. Paul writes: The kingdom of God is not a question of exterior rules, but justice and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Rm 14:13-19

22 Tue Be open-handed towards your neighbour and towards the poor and needy in your land.

Dt 15:7-11

23 Wed Jesus said to his disciples: I no longer call you servants, for a servant does not know his master's business. I call you friends, because everything I have learnt from my Father I have made known to you.

Jn 15:15-17

24 Thu You who reverence the Lord, trust in him, await his good gifts: everlasting joy and mercy.

Sl 2:1-11

25 Fri Jesus said: Some think that by using many words in their prayer, they will make themselves heard. Do not be like them; your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

Mt 6:7-15

26 Sat In a vision, Isaiah heard the voice of the Lord say, "Whom shall I send?" And he answered, "Here I am, send me."

Is 6:1-8

27 SUN Jesus said: Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is close at hand.

Mt 4:12-17

28 Mon Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. Instead, repay with a blessing, for to this you were called.

1 P 3:8-17

29 Tue Jesus said in a parable: Some, like seeds sown in good soil, listen to the Word of God, accept it, and bear much fruit.

Mk 4:1-9,13-20

30 Wed God says: I am the Beginning and the End. I shall give water from the well of life freely to anyone who is thirsty.

Rv 21:5-7

31 Thu Jesus' disciples came to him and he taught them saying: Happy are the poor in spirit, the kingdom of heaven is theirs.

Mt 5:1-12

JANUARY

MEDITATING ON THE WORD

These short readings are those read, day by day, at community prayer in Taizé. The Bible reference given indicates a slightly longer passage.

3 SUN Mt 5:1-12 Jesus said: Blessed are you when people falsely say all kinds of things against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.

4 Mon Heb 10:19-25 Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and in fullness of faith. Let us hold to the hope we profess, without wavering, for the one who has promised is faithful.

5 Tue Rv 3:7-8 Thus says the Lord: Though you are not very strong, you have kept my Word, and now I have opened before you a door that no one can close.

6 Wed Jn 10:11-18 Jesus said: I am the good shepherd. My sheep will listen to my voice and there will be one flock and one shepherd.

7 Thu Jn 15:1-8 Jesus said: I am the true vine. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit unless it remains part of the vine, neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

1 Fri Sl 35:12-14, 16-18 (35:14-22) God is utterly impartial. God never shows partiality to the detriment of the poor, but listens to the prayer of the one who is wronged.

2 Sat Lk 2:22-38 PRESENTATION OF THE LORD When Simeon saw the child Jesus, he praised God and said: Now, Lord, you can let your servant depart in peace. For my eyes have seen the salvation you have prepared for all people to see.

10 SUN Mt 5:13-16 Jesus said to his disciples: You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill-top cannot be hidden.

11 Mon 1 P 1:3-9 Though you have not seen Christ Jesus, you love him. Still without seeing him you believe in him and so are already filled with a joy so glorious it cannot be described.

12 Tue Jn 6:67-69 Seeing that many of his disciples were turning away, Jesus said to the Twelve, "What about you, do you want to go away too?" Peter answered, "Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words of eternal life."

13 Wed Ps 51 ASH WEDNESDAY O God, you desire truth in the inward being. Create in me a pure heart and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

14 Thu Ba 5:1-9 Leave behind your sadness and put on for ever the beauty of God's glory. For the Lord will guide you in joy, with the mercy and saving justice that come from him.

15 Fri Jr 2:1-13 The Lord said of his people: They have forsaken me, the fount of living water, and have dug themselves cracked cisterns that will not hold water.

16 Sat Mk 4:35-41 When Jesus had calmed the storm on the sea, the disciples were overcome with awe and said: Who can this be? Even the wind and sea obey him.

17 SUN Mt 4:1-11 Jesus said to the tempter: Away with you! For Scripture says, "Worship the Lord your God, and serve him alone".

18 Mon Lk 22:24-27 Jesus said to his disciples: Who is the greater: the one at table or the one who serves? The one at table, surely? Yet I am among you as one who serves.

19 Tue 2 Co 8:7-15 Be generous, for you know the generosity of our Lord Jesus Christ who became poor for your sake.

20 Wed Jl 2:12-13 The Lord says: Come back to me with all your heart. Come back to the Lord your God who is tender and compassionate, and rich in faithful love.

21 Thu 2 Co 12:1-10 Paul writes: God said to me: My grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.

22 Fri Ep 4:17-32 Let yourselves be made new in the attitude of your minds and be clothed with the new self, which is created to be like God in justice and in holiness of the truth.

23 Sat Ezk 3:10-11 God said to Ezekiel: Son of man, listen carefully to all my words and take them to heart, then go to your compatriots and speak to them.

24 SUN Mt 17:1-9 At the transfiguration of Jesus, the disciples fell face down to the ground, terrified. But Jesus came and touched them. "Get up," he said. "Don't be afraid."

25 Mon Dt 7:7-8 Moses told the people: God set his heart on you and chose you, not because you are more numerous than other peoples, but out of love for you.

26 Tue Lk 10:25-37 Having told the parable of the good Samaritan, Jesus asked, "Who showed themselves to be a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" They answered him, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus said, "Go and do likewise."

27 Wed Lk 19:1-10 Zacchaeus climbed a tree to see Jesus as he passed. Jesus said to him: "Come down. Hurry, because I am to stay at your house today." And he hurried down and welcomed him joyfully.

28 Thu Lk 6:27-35 Jesus said: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.

In this letter to the Corinthians, Paul resists a vision of the Christian faith which restricts itself to abstractions and theoretical understanding. With an astonishing sense of community he refused to accept the individualism, divisions (see chapter 1:11-12) and the partisan mindedness which an abstract Christianity had allowed to develop. The God whom Christ reveals, and who distributes the gifts of his spirit widely, continues his plan of gathering all people together. Spiritual gifts must necessarily be at the service of this plan (see chapters 12 and 14).

Christian faith is anchored in a history, not in abstractions. It is with our bodies that we take up position in reality (ch. 5). As always for Paul, mysticism and ethics are inseparable. It is with this same body that we await the resurrection (ch. 15). It is true that the resurrection has already begun, but it is also true that we await the full manifestation of the victory over death. And this hope extends to the most material consequences, to the body itself.

At times in this letter we sense that the author wants to avoid being misunderstood. How could such a profoundly intelligent man be against knowledge? How could he, incomparable mystic that he was, be opposed to spiritual gifts? He certainly knew that even if the Christian faith bursts the boundaries of rationality, it does not contradict reason. In Christ there is also a wisdom (ch 1:30). And in order to walk in faith we need to reflect (otherwise it would be a waste of time even writing to the Corinthians). But Paul joins knowledge and love. A knowledge which does not include love and guide us to it is suspect.

In chapter 13 we are able to grasp why this word "love" is so dear to him. The splendid hymn he writes is not in any way sentimental. Whoever loves with the love described in this passage will never be ensnared into a false spirituality.

- In what areas are we sometimes too abstract?
- How can the reality of love that Paul describes in chapter 13 help us to discover a path of faith?

Each time a personal ordeal or a crisis concerning the whole of humanity arises, whether it is serious illness, natural disaster, conflict or violence, we are disconcerted. Our plans are upset and even our identity can be called into question. The idea we have of the world and of our own lives is at stake and we are beset by worry: what if the misfortune were to continue? In such a situation, what is the peace which Christ gives?

Let us remember Elijah's discovery on Mount Horeb (1 Kings 19:11-14): God was not in the fire, nor in the earthquake, nor in the hurricane, but in the murmur of silence. In order to discover what Christ calls us to live, we first need to find our way to this silence. We need to silence the voices which play upon our fears and pass beyond the images of violence, suffering and anger which can so easily monopolise our attention.

Jesus gives peace by reassuring us that the bond with him will remain, whatever our fears. After his resurrection, he even says: "Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so I am sending you." (John 20:21)

In the face of the fears I have of losing myself, with the limits and doubts I have, it is only natural to want to withdraw and protect myself. But even though I feel myself completely incapable of being "sent out" and this call to give of myself takes me out of my depth, there is nevertheless, deep down within me, a longing to follow in the footsteps of Christ.

- How does Christ the Servant set me free from my fears? When have I discovered the way in which he looks on situations?
- What does it mean to share in the universal heart of Christ, and to be a bearer of an urgent good news for all human beings?

Japan

Sing and walk

A series of meetings took place recently in Japan, led by one of the brothers. A young American, Charles, in Japan teaching English, gives this account:

These words – "Sing and walk" – appeared and reappeared throughout the meetings in Tokyo, Nagano and Osaka like the refrain of a song. A photograph displayed in the church at the start of the meeting showed a Peruvian boy carrying his rucksack down a country road with a determined stride while playing a flute; he was to become a metaphor, in many ways, for each participant's own pilgrimage. Among other things, he illustrated that, although we often separate our playing from our walking – the beautiful aspects of life from the daily obligations of work and home – it is possible to create beauty even in the most ordinary of daily tasks; to "sing and walk".

"Journey to the Heart", the meeting at the Ikebukuro Anglican Church in Tokyo, took as its theme a pilgrimage in daily life. Part of the theme was provided by the parable of the lost coin (Luke 15:8-10) and Origen's commentary: "It was not outside but in her house that the woman who had lost her silver coin found it again...For your part, if you light your 'lamp', if you make use of the illumination of the Holy

Spirit...you will find the silver coin in you" (Homily on Genesis). Among the questions that guided our reflection were, "How can I 'light my lamp', see clearly enough to sweep out the 'dust' of whatever is not essential in my life and distracts me from my true purpose, and rediscover within me that which will make my life complete?"

For four days, we would meet at the church early in the morning for prayers, have breakfast together in silence, then go to work or school as usual.

In the evening, we would come back to the church to enjoy a dinner consisting in part of vegetables provided by a convent in Akita, and prepared by an energetic team of volunteers; then have a prayer session together before retiring to the churches, convents, and one Catholic monastery that had graciously agreed to host us.

Those of us who were able to stay through the whole day could enjoy a time of silent reflection and sharing in the morning; then, in the afternoon, small groups continued the pilgrimage around Tokyo: holding prayer sessions in nearby churches and religious communities; helping prepare hot meals for the homeless and unemployed at the St. Mary Cafeteria in the Sanya district of the city; and visiting hospitals, nursing homes, and the home of a young woman whom an accident had left paralysed.

During these afternoon pilgrimages,

some groups took the phrase "Sing and walk" quite literally, as voices singing Taizé songs could be heard not only in churches, beside hospital beds, or over hot stoves and rice cookers, but also on the crowded streets and trains of Tokyo – little islands of peace in a frantic city!

On the last day, when we went our separate ways, the questions on everyone's mind were, "How can I continue this pilgrimage? How can I make prayer and reflection a part of my daily life, and preserve the peace of heart that we shared during this time together? How can I continue to 'sing and walk'?"

The meeting in Nagano was similar; about 10 people gathered in the chapel of the Anglican hospital on Monday evening for a time of evening prayer and silence, then prayed together before work the following morning, and concluded the program with prayer together that evening. Even though the program was brief, it was enough to make participants realize that it is possible to listen to the Word in the midst of daily life.

The Kansai meeting was held at a campsite in the countryside of Osaka, which gave us many chances to "sing and walk" along winding trails in the heart of the woods. Nearly 100 people came to the meeting, for the chance to take a step back and look at their lives from a different perspective; as one of the brothers said, like stepping back a few paces from a detailed mural you had

been examining closely, and being able to say, "Oh, this is what the whole picture looks like! It's so beautiful, and I hadn't even realized it!"

Each participant came to the meeting with his or her own questions, hopes, and longings. Among them, since the retreat began immediately following the terrorist attacks on the United States, were questions similar to the ones the Taizé brother posed during a morning introduction: "At times like this, we wonder, 'Where is joy? Where is peace?'"

On the last night, a special prayer around the cross was dedicated to the victims of the attacks. During the prayer around the cross, as part of the idea of "offering ourselves to God", each person who came forward to pray left behind some object that represented him or her: a flower, or a stone, or a musical manuscript, or a paper crane symbolizing peace.

The sight of each person coming forward to offer his or her prayer, and the sound of everyone's voices blending in song, was a powerful symbol of peace and hope. And, when we concluded the prayer around the cross and proceeded at once to light the candles that each was holding and sing songs of the Resurrection, the joy that filled the church was a reminder that even in the darkest night, when all hope seems lost, God can suddenly come and fill our hearts with a joy beyond our imagination.

The participants in these meetings returned home carrying hope, comfort, thanksgiving, and peace of heart as the Peruvian boy in the picture carried his rucksack down the road - and like him, have found ways to "create a space of hope around themselves," as Brother Roger wrote, even in the midst of daily life.

Although the meetings lasted for only a few brief days, the memories we cre-

ated will last forever, as will the friendships that formed during the time that we shared. To this day, those who joined the meetings are helping and encouraging each other along their own pilgrimages, and together, discovering new ways to live each day in peace and trust, and to create beauty in our daily lives - to sing and walk.

Timor Loro'Sae

Reconstruction

One of the Taizé brothers recently made a short visit to East Timor. He writes: "Hardly one hour after my arrival in Dili, I was meeting with a group of young primary school teachers. You could see in their faces what they had been through, together with the faith that had carried them, and the hope mingled with uncertainty for the future. And these first impressions were confirmed by the countless stories and by the signs of the 1999 massacre that are visible at every step.

Going from the airport to the house, I was so busy talking with my hosts that was not fully aware of the traces of destruction. Later, I could see them everywhere. So many houses without doors or windows; sometimes there are just walls without a roof. The schools have been burned but classes continue and you can see children going to school carrying chairs they have brought from home.

An elderly Italian sister described the events almost hour by hour: the destruction of the "Camera Episcopal", three thousand refugees at the bishop's house, two thousand in each of their centres, the fourteen year old boy who shot at the Bishop Belo who only just escaped, the murder of two of their sisters and a young priest.

Since the United Nations forces arrived, life has started up again and rebuilding has begun. The university has been rebuilt by the Portuguese, but there is no infrastructure at all. Which currency should be adopted: the rupiah, the American dollar or the Australian dollar? There are no numberplates on the cars, there are no controls, mail is not distributed, the telephone goes through Australia which has extended its network so that at least the mobile phones can function sometimes. The cost of living is much higher because everything comes from abroad.

I arrived just before a day for "Paz, Tolerancia, Democracia". It was Bishop Belo who invited the people of Dili to celebrate this day. It began with mass at his home. I was really moved to see how his house, where I had stayed in 1992, had been completely destroyed and was now being rebuilt. The mass took place in the garden. The theme was "peace,

unity and reconciliation", with very moving contributions from a woman, an old man, a young man, and a child.

For the afternoon, Bishop Belo had called on the sixteen political parties to come together to sign a pact of "peace, tolerance and democracy". The meetings drew a big crowd, with Guxmao, Horta and Sana present. First of all there was a liturgy of the Word, then singing, dances, then the representatives of all the parties came up onto the podium. Children offered their flowers, doves were released and the pact was signed. This is a very clear initiative that invites each one to work together with the others.

Perhaps the most revealing conversations were in Baucau, with the priests and the Bishop, Dom Basilio. The young people today have missed out on what is essential: tenderness and being paid attention to. The one thing they have known is bereavement. All the families have lost a father, a brother; sometimes two members of the family have been killed or have disappeared without trace. They have seen all this with their own eyes. They certainly have hatred in their hearts, conscious or unconscious. They do not have the means to look at this hatred and to realise that as Christians we have to transform it. Their soul is wounded.

Several people told me, and I was aware of it myself, that the prayers were able to prepare were like a kind of healing. Some of the Taizé songs have been translated into Tetun. In Baucau there is a weekly prayer that is held in the chapel of the Ursuline Sisters."

Letter from Taizé

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